

Arizona Department of Veterans' Service Advisory Commission
4141 N. 3rd Street (North S. Herrera Way), Phoenix, AZ 85012
August 9, 2012

MINUTES

Advisory Commissioners

George Cushing, Chair
Terrie Gent
Wayne Krula
Ronald Perkins
Lionel Sanchez
David Toliver, Sr.

Absent

Philip Hanson (travelling)
Jeffrey Olson, Vice Chair (previously excused)

AZ Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS)

Joey Strickland, Director
Homer Rodgers, Assistant Deputy Director
Gabe Forsberg, Strategic Planner/Women Vets
Dave Hampton, Public Information Officer

Guests

Pacer Reina, *Vet Rep for the Salt River Pima
Maricopa Indian Community (Desert Storm
Veteran)*
Gordon Rhone, *Chaplain/Trustee AMVETS Dept. of
Arizona & Asst. Chaplain, American Legion, Area B*

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman George Cushing. Before proceeding to official business, Chairman Cushing acknowledged two Commissioners who had been selected by the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame to be inducted this fall – Lionel Sanchez and Ron Perkins. There were two additional selectees who were former Commissioners – Linda Fulkerson and Tom Dingwall, both former Chairpersons.

The minutes were approved as published.

Agency Updates – Director Joey Strickland provided an overview to the Commission. The VA is currently processing a backlog of over 22,000 claims and the average processing time for claims is 306 days. Additionally, Director Strickland asked Assistant Deputy Director Homer Rodgers to provide an overview with construction progress. He also handed out a written report to all Commissioners. The groundbreaking for the Sierra Vista cemetery expansion is September 17 and the Commissioners are all invited to participate.

Commission Appointment Delays and Effect on the Commission's Planning Efforts

Director Strickland will schedule a meeting with Linda Stiles, Director of the Governor's Boards and Commissions at a time when Chairman Cushing can join them. Dave Hampton will also include this as a key issue when the department submits its report to the Policy Advisory on Military and Veteran Affairs.

Terrie Gent recommended that it is important to consider diversity as the selections are made and that all areas of the state should be represented. Dave Hampton indicated that he had reached out to the Native American veteran community when sending out the application to serve on the Commission. Director Strickland said that he would also ask for a Native American nominee through Kristine Firethunder, Executive Director of the Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs.

Commission Regional Assignments – The state has been divided into four regions and there are to be two assigned Commissioners for each. Chairman Cushing asked that the Commissioners provide feedback about his recommended assignments:

- Region 1: Cushing and Perkins
- Region 2: Hanson and Sanchez
- Region 3: Gent and Olson
- Region 4: Toliver and Krula

Ron Perkins moved to approve the assignments and Lionel Sanchez seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Director Strickland offered to have Mike Klier and all four of the Regional Managers at the next meeting (September 13) to meet the Commissioners. The two Commissioners assigned to each region will routinely coordinate with the appropriate Regional Managers about activities in the area they should know about. The assigned Commissioners will be attending events that are being held in the area and will bring handouts and the Commission's table-top display.

Commission Guidelines and Strategic Plan Review Committee – Chairman Cushing asked Vicechair Olson to head up this committee and knew that he wouldn't be able to attend the meeting this month. This agenda item will appear every month until the strategic plan and guideline have been revised.

Dave Toliver made notes of issues that should be considered as they develop the strategic plan and guidelines.

For the Good of the Order – Pacer Reina with the Salt River Pima Community recommended that the Legislative Coordinator with the Inter-Tribal Council may be a good liaison between the Commission and the Native American community. There are approximately 300 veterans in their tribe (with a total of around 9000 total members). The majority of their veterans are World War II, Vietnam and Korea era. Mr. Reina said there were only 8 veterans were from more recent conflicts (Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn).

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m. The next meeting will be held September 13, 2012.